



Harford County Commission on Veterans Affairs Meeting Notes

September 6, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Brown at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room, 220 S. Main Street, Bel Air, Maryland.

Attending: Bob Brown, Hayden Anthony, Lisa Brown, Janice Cassady, Jim Castelli, Art Kaff, Bill Montgomery, Mike Ray, Heather Roelker, Pam Silcox, Deacon Vic Petrosino

Excused: Bill Elliott, Scott Kearby, Patricia O'Keefe, Larry Owens, Cindy Smith, Councilman McMahan (liaison)

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Brown. Prayer was led by Deacon Vic.

Welcome & Opening Comments:

Chairman Brown – presented the HCCOVA Mission and Vision statements and asked members present to continue to think about activities and projects for this upcoming year that would support our mission to assist veterans and their families. He also introduced & welcomed Heather Roelker to the HCCOVA as the representative for the APG Post Commander.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Amy Parker – President, Women's Army Corps Veterans Association – WACVA/Army United, Aberdeen chapter. WACVA is a national organization with the mission to provide support to women veterans. There are 19 chapters nationwide. In 1983 a retired NCO started a chapter in Maryland and the Aberdeen chapter remains as the only one in the state of Maryland. Through a charter with VA Maryland Health Care system they support women veterans in 3 ways:

- monetary donations to the VA
- volunteer activities at the facilities
- gathering/purchasing items for individual care packages – inpatient, hospice, homeless

The Aberdeen chapter meets on the 1st Saturday of every month at 12 PM, currently at the Venetian Place in Edgewood. There are currently 35 members, including affiliate members from other services. Membership is \$40/year (\$35 of which is forwarded to the national organization). Their next fundraiser is a Fall Paint & Sip Party on Sep 23rd at Venetian Palace.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from the August HCCOVA meeting were sent to commission members for review prior to September meeting. No corrections were put forward; Pam Silcox motioned for approval of the minutes and Hayden Anthony seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved by commission members.

Opening Comments from Appointed Members:

Bill Montgomery – reported about the past month’s Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance Program (TAP) that he serves as a volunteer. The program helps military service members’ transition to civilian life, whether through separation or retirement from active duty. Approximately 15 soldiers were transitioning at this latest session. Bill said he mentions HCCOVA as a resource.

Art Kaff – continuing to post information on the HCCOVA Facebook page & respond to requests for legal assistance from veterans &/or veterans’ family members. He also posts information on events & jobs. (Bill Montgomery suggested putting a link to guest speaker’s organization & information on the HCCOVA Facebook &/or website).

Heather Roelker – introduced herself to commission members. She is with the office of APG Public Affairs and works with both the Commanding General (MG Taylor) & Garrison Commander (COL Phillips). The goal of the command is to have at least 2 events per year at APG that are open to the public. This year’s events include Discovery Fest in April, the Retiree Fair in May, & a Career Fair which will be held on September 15th at the APG Rec Center. In addition, Oktoberfest is scheduled for September 14th & 15th on Shine Sports Field, APG.

Janice Cassady - HCC fall semester classes began on August 27th. Over 100 veterans enrolled in classes, & requests for tuition assistance have increased (approximately 20 requests). There have been some changes to the GI Bill, including a restriction that it can only be transferred to dependents if you have less than 16 years of service.

Lisa Brown - working on framework for Veteran’s Day assembly so that all schools will have a basic plan for coordinating an assembly to honor our military service members. She also plans to petition the HCPS Board of Education to adjust the school calendar so that Veteran’s Day is recognized as a school holiday.

Deacon Vic Petrosino – expanding efforts to reach out to veterans who are inpatients at local area hospitals, including connecting volunteers with required training for hospital volunteers.

OLD BUSINESS

Veterans Resource Fair 2018 Updates – Bob Brown, Pam Silcox, Hayden Anthony, Lisa Brown

- Saturday, November 10th from 10 am – 1:00 pm at Bel Air Armory
- Since this is the 100th anniversary of WWI (& the Armory), the theme of the fair is: “Century of Service”. The Historical Society will provide information for the fair & there will be several WWI displays. A wreath-laying ceremony will take place in front of the armory at the beginning of the resource fair.
- Detailed flyer is being finalized & should be printed by early September. Other promotional material is also being printed & will be distributed to various media outlets.
- Need assistance getting flyers out to various Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) so they can spread the word to their members through their newsletters, etc.

- Heather will advertise event on the APG marquee. County personnel will create banners that will be hung on the county building, armory & the back of Bam-Bam, the Mission BBQ truck that will be parked outside the armory the night before the event.
- Currently, there are 18 confirmed vendors. Pam & Heather will work together to investigate the possibility of a healthcare area at the fair, with free medical, dental & vision screening.
- Door prizes will be given away every 20 minutes throughout the fair, capping off with a Harley-Davidson motorcycle giveaway at the end of the fair. Lisa asked commission members to bring door prize donations to the October HCCOVA meeting.
- Idea was brought forward to create a veteran's discount card listing the discounts various stores in our local area offer to military service members. Bill Montgomery volunteered to work on this project; Mike Ray will send out e-mail to Chamber of Commerce members & provide responses to Bill for incorporation.
- Harford County will provide bags for fair attendees to use for handouts, giveaways, etc.
- Mission BBQ will provide most of the food for the event, and Lisa is contacting other businesses for additional food & drink donations.
- Subcommittee chairs met to begin coordination efforts & will meet with members starting in September to prepare for the fair.
- Subcommittees for major areas:
 - Marketing – newspapers, TV, flyers, social media
 - Facilities – set-up, teardown, permits, equipment
 - Food/Drinks – coordination, pricing, serving, supplies
 - Programming – guest speaker, singer, color guard, raffle, VIP invites, vendors

Goals/Objectives for 2018/19

- Looking towards next year and whether to add &/or changes the HCCOVA objectives
- Due to time constraints tonight, Chairman Brown asked all commission members to come prepared with their thoughts & ideas during a meeting in the future.

Subcommittee Updates & Upcoming Events

- Need to align subcommittees to address issues affecting veterans on that subject and to answer/respond to requests for assistance/information from veterans &/or their families. Chairman Brown asked members to individually consider their alignment and whether they needed to change to another subcommittee.

NEW BUSINESS – None presented.

Final Announcements

- The next HCCOVA meeting will be Thursday, October 4th at 6:30 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Prepared by Lisa Brown